1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17



it generally has a federal type of organization, in that each culture group within this settlement is semi-autonomous, and a common village authority drawn from all these groups has overriding powers for the community as a whole. In areas where there are intense or even pronounced inter-caste rivalries and tensions, the caste composition of the village will largely determine its patterns of inter-group adjustment.

It goes without saying that in a primarily agricultural country land must be greatly prized; and, with the great pressure of population and the conditions of private ownership, possession of land has not only an economic but a social and prestige value as well. Where all the land belongs to a landlord or is held by two or more landlords—as in the case of 'joint-villages'—the organization of the village is sure to be very different from that of a village inhabited by proprietary tenants. The general ratio of land distribution between two or more castes, between certain families or between one big landowner and the rest of the community may have a vital influence on the nature of village organization and problems.

No village in India is completely autonomous and independent, for it is always one unit in a wider social system and is a part of an organized political society. An individual is not the member of a village community alone; he also belongs to a caste, religious group or tribe which has a wider territorial spread and comprises several villages. These units have their own organization, authority and sanctions. Politically the villages are under the legislative, executive and judicial authority of the Indian Union and one of its constituent States. For administrative convenience these States are divided into districts, the latter being subdivided into *tehsils* or *taluquas*. In day-to-day administration the villages come into contact with the authorities and officials of this subdivision and of the district, although the laws of the State and the Union are binding on them. The village thus has independence and autonomy only in its domestic affairs. But who exercises the authority in this field? Is there a petty feudal landlord who has some administrative and judicial powers as well? Is there a government-recognized landlord who has arrogated to himself administrative powers? Or, has the village a *panchayat* (village council) constituted on the basis of local tradition? All the feudal states have been abolished in Republican India; but petty feudal estates still continue in